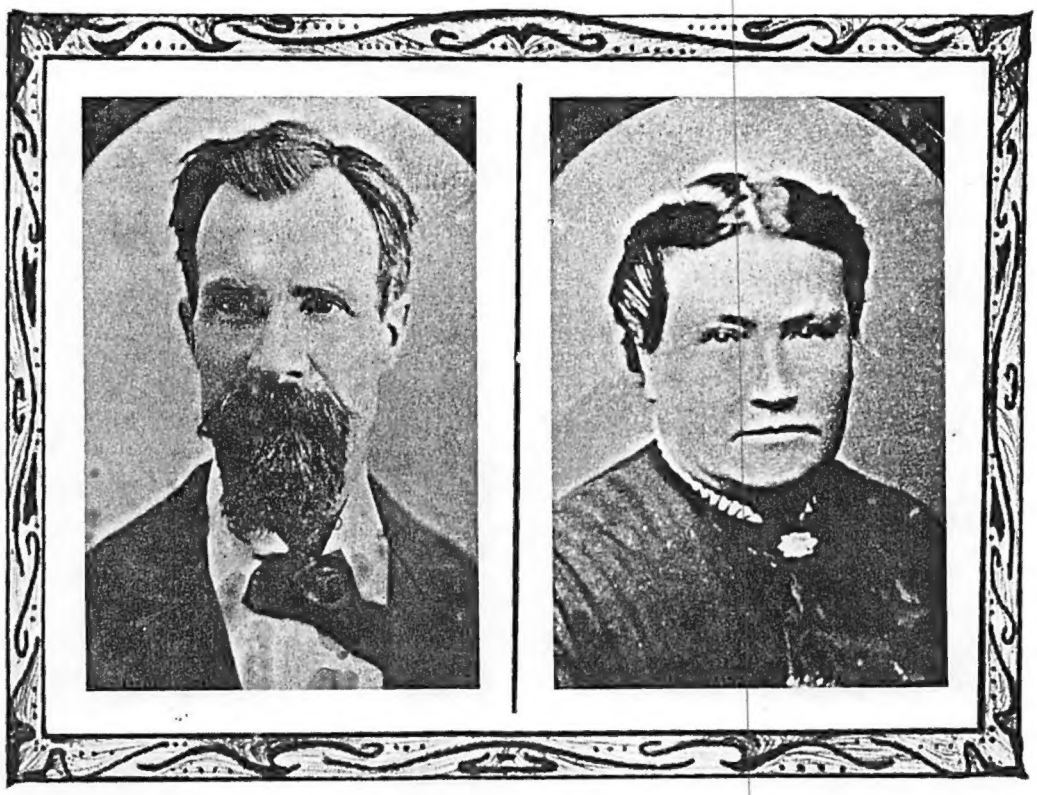
JOSEPH SMITH McDONALD — NANCY ELIZABETH CUMMINGS



Joseph Smith McDonald was born Oct. 16, 1842, in Crawfordsburn, Down County, Ireland, the ninth child and sixth son in the family of ten children born to James McDonald and Sarah Ferguson. His name held great meaning to his parents who only the previous year had heard and had accepted the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Joseph was little more than a year old when his family left Ireland to sail for Liverpool and thence to America, but with eight children ranging in age from Jane at sixteen years to Joseph at fifteen months, there were plenty of hands to care for the baby and for his brother David who was about three years old.

The McDonalds were a sturdy clan and weathered the ocean voyage well. In Nauvoo Joseph was too young to understand the meaning of persecutions. He was nearing his fourth birthday when a mob drove them from their home. To make sure they were gone the mob ferried them across the Mississippi River. Left without their belongings and huddled together to sleep on the bare ground, little Joseph understood full well that all was not as it should be.

The family had reached the Great Salt Lake Valley before Joseph was eight years old but he remembered always the Indians and buffalo that were so often seen enroute across the plains. In later years he wrote of a buffalo stampede: "One day the Captain rode about half way up the train of wagons and directed the first section to drive on. The other half were held back to allow room for a herd of buffalo to pass. There were hundreds of them all on the run. It took nearly half the day for them to pass."

Indians were a pertinent part of Joseph's childhood and early manhood. For several years after the family was established at Springville (March 1851) it was Joseph's lot to herd the cows in Hobble Creek Canyon. He wrote: "I herded cows every day. There were a lot of Indians around. They stole our dinners. We would fight for it, but they were men and we were boys. It always ended with us boys getting a licking and the Indians getting our dinner."

Joseph was only eleven years old at the onset of the Walker Indian War, but he later wrote in his journal what is no doubt a clear explanation of the beginning of that episode in Utah history. He states:

"It was James Ivy who was the principal actor in the drama that caused the Walker war. Walker, the war chief of the Ute nation, with his braves and their families, was camped on Spring Creek about one mile north of the present town of Springville, Utah County, Utah. The Indians were at peace with the white men, spending their time fishing and hunting, trading and being with the people.

"James Ivy at that time had built a cabin and was living in it with his wife and one child, about one mile north and west of where the Indians were camped. In the forenoon of July 17, 1853, an Indian squaw came into Ivy's cabin. The squaw had three large trout which she wanted to trade to Mrs. Ivy for some flour. Flour being very scarce at that time, Mrs. Ivy called her husband in to get his views on a trade of that kind. He was at work digging a well. When he saw the trout he said, 'Those look mighty good to me,' and suggested that Mrs. Ivy might give three pints of flour for them if the squaw would trade that way. He then went out of the cabin to resume his work.

"Just as Ivy left, two more Indians came into the cabin. One of them seemed to have been the husband or had some kind of claim on the squaw who had closed the trade with Mrs. Ivy. When this Indian saw the trout he became enraged and began beating the squaw, knocking her down, kicking and stamping her in a brutal manner. While the assault was being committed, Mrs. Ivy ran and called her husband and Mr. Ivy came to the cabin while the Indian was still beating the squaw. He took hold of the Indian and pulled him away, the squaw lying prostrate on the floor. Ivy tried to push the Indian out of the cabin.

"When the Indian came in he had left his gun standing by the door. As Ivy pushed him out he grabbed his gun and tried to get into position to shoot Ivy. Ivy got hold of the muzzle of the gun and in the struggle the gun was broken, the Indian retaining the stock and Ivy the barrel. When the gun broke Ivy dealt the Indian a hard blow on the head with the barrel of the gun. The Indian fell to the ground, apparently dead, but didn't expire until some hours later. The other Indian, who come to the cabin at the same time, drew his bow and arrow and shot Ivy, the arrow passing through the shoulder of Ivy's hunting shirt. At this, Ivy struck the Indian a violent blow and he fell unconscious by the side of the prostrate body of the other Indian. Just as Ivy got through with this second Indian, the squaw he had been trying to protect came out of the cabin door with a stick of wood in her hand which she had picked up by the fireplace in the cabin. With it she struck Ivy a blow in the face, cutting a deep gash in his upper lip. The scar showed plainly from that time until his death. Ivy again used the gun barrel to defend himself and struck the squaw. She fell unconscious by the side of the other two Indians.

"There was great excitement. I was a boy with big ears and I heard everything that was going on. We tried to settle with them by giving them everything they wanted in beef, ponies, flour, blankets; but Walker refused to settle unless Ivy was given up to be tried by the Indians. This was refused by the white people so the Indians left for the mountains and the war was on. It lasted two years."

Joseph and his mother were left alone when his oldest brother, John, was married in December of 1856. Two years later when a detachment of the U. S. Army settled Camp Floyd about 15 miles north and west of Springville, Joseph was among those employed to work there. He helped make adobes and was paid $90.00 in gold. That was a fortune for a 16-year old boy to bring to his mother in those days.

In 1860 the families of John, William and Jane (George W. Clyde) all moved to Provo Valley, which is now known as Heber City. John Hamilton and Joseph's sister Mary, had gone there the previous year.

The plan was for Joseph and his mother to follow, but Joseph harbored far more adventurous ideas for himself. Of these he wrote:

"I was going to leave my family and go to the gold mines to get rich quick. I was already to go and they coaxed me to help them go to Heber. I did so and when we got here they held a meeting for my benefit and made every offer that was reasonable if I would stay only one year. So I stayed, and I haven't got started yet. I always think if I had gone I would have gotten rich and had plenty of money and no trouble, but I stayed and got married.

I am the father of seventeen children and I would not take ten thousand dollars apiece for them so I think that is more money than I would have gotten had I gone to the gold mines. But deduct the trouble I have had from that and it would leave me a small margin in cash."

In early years of the settlement of Provo Valley, Indian troubles made it necessary for all families to live within the Fort during periods of danger. Just opposite the McDonald section of the Fort was the home of John Cummings. Joseph wrote in his journal:

"While living in Heber I got acquainted with a very respectable family by the name of Cummings. There was the old woman and five boys and one girl. I always liked the girl best. We kept company for awhile and the first thing I knew I was engaged and I never thought of getting married for I was going to the mines in the spring. I was only twenty and she was nineteen, just a couple of kids, but we kept on going together for two years more before we could agree to set a time to be married. She made me a good partner, always agreeable and nice, but she died and left me alone with seven children."

Joseph was married to Nancy Elizabeth Cummings in 1863, and the McDonald brothers helped him build a cabin for his bride on the corner of what is now 3rd North and 1st West Street. That was just through the block from her parent's home and only three blocks from the log home the McDonald boys had constructed for their mother, Sarah.

The tranquility of Joseph's and Nancy's early married years was disturbed by the outbreak of the Black Hawk Indian War. His journal says:

"The Indians gave us a good deal of trouble in Wasatch County. We had to put our cattle all together and then men herded them day and night. Otherwise they stole our cattle right out of our corrals and our wheat from the bins. About ten or fifteen of the good Indians came in and said they wanted peace. So Bishop Joe Murdock made a big feast under the bowery and we all ate with them and gave them all the beef and bedding they wanted because they were so good; but next night they stole thirty head of our horses to pack it off with. We followed them as far as Green River and got some of the horses, but saw no Indians."

Their original log room was added to as the family of Joseph and Nancy increased. They had seven children, four boys and three girls. Joseph supplied a living by farming and stock raising. He also operated a saw mill, and was awarded the contract to supply pickets to fence the Heber City Cemetery for which he was granted two burial lots.

They wondered what they would do with so much burial ground, but each place is filled now. Nancy was the first to be placed there. After 15 months of suffering she died, Oct. 18, 1881.

Joseph was assisted in the care of his family by his wife's sister, Sarah Ann Cummings Jones and her daughter, Mary Melinda. Joseph and Mary Melinda were married two years later. They remained in the old home until 1891 when they moved to Buysville Ward (now Daniels) and homesteaded 160 acres of land.

As his sons grew to manhood Joseph allotted tracts of land to each, and he saw his grandchildren grow up in homes relatively near his own. Cora McDonald Wathen said, "We always called him Father. It began when he said he was too young to be called Grandpa. He requested that since his children called him Pa, that the grandchildren call him Father. We did, and his great-grandchildren called him Grandfather.

"I remember on Christmas mornings wading in snow up to my knees just to tell Grandma and Father Merry Christmas and hoping that they would have an orange for us children. They always did."

The southeast corner of the Joesph Smith McDonald homestead was donated to the Daniel Ward on which to build a church and recreation hall.

Joseph was blind for several years before his death Mar. 15, 1930, age 88 years. His wife Mary, although deaf, was able to care for him. She suffered with cancer for three years before her death on Dec. 7, 1936.

On Dec. 31, 1951, the posterity of Joseph S. McDonald totaled 527 living descendants.

Nancy Elizabeth Cummings McDonald was born 7 Sept. 1843, at Nauvoo, Illinois, the 4th daughter and 6th child born to John Cummings and Rachel Canada.[1] Her brothers and sisters were Mary Jane Cummings born Oct. 28, 1834, who married Richard Jones; William Cummings born July 31, 1835, who married Mary Ann Meeks; Isaac Cummings born 31 May, 1837, who married Sarah Jones; Sarah Ann Cummings born 20 Mar., 1839, who married Elisha Jones; Malinda Cummings born 6 April, 1841, who married Jacob Baum; John James Cummings born 25 March, 1846, who married (1) Hannah Sophia Johnson and (2) Lenora Duke; Harmon Cummings born 7 July, 1850, who married Isabelle Florinda Dayton; Thomas Cummings born in 1845 who died in childhood and Joseph Cummings born in 1857 who never married.

The parents and the first five of their children were contented in Gibson County, Tennessee, until they heard the gospel message of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints which they accepted readily even though to do so meant per-

[1]There is question in the minds of some family members as to whether Rachel's maiden name was "Canada," "Canarda," or "Kennedy."

secution from erstwhile friends and neighbors. Thorough preparations were made in secret, and in 1842 John and Rachel with their five little children, all under eight years of age, slipped quietly away to join with the saints in Nauvoo.

Nancy Elizabeth was born there in 1843, and like Joseph Smith McDonald, her future husband, she was too young to understand the suffering and sacrifice that prevailed. The Cummings family was among those expelled from Nauvoo in 1846.

They crossed the state of Iowa that year and established themselves at Gallows Grove about five miles from Kanesville which was adjacent to Council Bluffs. They remained there five years. Then in the spring of 1852 they were among the 365 saints of Pottowattamie County whom Jedediah M. Grant organized in readiness to cross the plains.

Under direction of John Maxwell they started for Zion on June 24, 1852, the 16th group to depart that spring. As a part of the section led by Uriah Curtis, they arrived in Great Salt Lake City October 1, 1852. The mountain wilderness seethed with immigrants. Ten thousand saints had crossed the plains that summer. After a brief rest the Cummings family moved on to Provo where they arrived the 12th of October, 1852.

Nine years later the Cummings family joined with those who had begun the colonization of Provo Valley, now known as Heber City. They built their one room log home, which later boasted a "lean-to," on the west side of what is now Main Street between 3rd and 4th north. They had only fifteen acres of land under cultivation. One of their descendants wrote: "Material wealth was never allotted them. Their riches were found in mutual love and contentment."

As a product of this happy environment, Nancy Elizabeth was a radiant girl of 18 years when Joseph Smith McDonald and his mother arrived in the valley. A courtship sprang up immediately and in 1863 the wedding of Nancy Elizabeth and Joseph afforded occasion for celebration. They had little of worldly goods to begin with, but with determination and youthful energy they were soon comfortable in their new cabin, and they prospered with the years.

Married life was eventful for Nancy, but relatively short. In her 18 years as a wife she bore seven children, all of whom grew to adulthood. Only two months after her 38th birthday in 1881 Nancy died. Three generations of her posterity are here listed on chart form.